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Young King Crusoe, • or, **The Treasure Trove
OF FALCON KEY.**
By C. LITTLE.



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YOUNG KING CRUSOE;

OR,

The Treasure-Trove of Falcon Key.

By C. LITTLE,

Author of "Bootblack Bob: or, From Rags to Brocade," "Newsboy Ned," etc., etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

CAST ADRIFT.

"YES, you've got me; I'll admit it. But permit me to remind you, Amos Slycraft, that we are not buried yet, and that it is a long lane which has no turning."

These cool and dauntless words were delivered by a good-looking boy, whose appearance plainly indicated that he had not yet attained his sixteenth year.

But young as he evidently was, there was plenty of strength in his erect and supple frame.

There was plenty of courage and resolution in every line of his intelligent and rather studious countenance.

And although his position was one at which many a stout heart might have quailed, there was no sign of fear in his expressive gray eyes, and no tremor of weakness upon his handsomely chiseled lips.

Another in a predicament so singularly desperate and terrible might have cried out in horror and begged for mercy.

But Harry Crombie, for such was the boy's name, stood as cool and composed as if unconscious of any threatened peril.

He stood on the deck of a large schooner, one of the vessels sometimes used for carrying fruit from the West Indies to northern ports.

This was laden with a small and miscellaneous cargo, for it was southward bound.

It had already passed the Gulf Stream and the Great Bahama Bank, and was making its way through the Florida Strait.

Not many miles distant, looking starboard, lay the Florida Keys, those curious reefs and islets, many of which are so fatal to the unwary navigator.

It was a gloomy night, so dark that the white sails of the schooner looked in the obscurity like the formless wings of some strange ocean monster flapping and bellying in the fitful gale.

There was an angry sea, with great black waves which now and then lifted the vessel almost upon her beam ends, and seemed for the instant ready to engulf her.

But the Gulf Queen, as the schooner was named, was stanch and tried; and she had weathered fiercer gales and more dangerous billows than those which now beset her.

It was something worse than shipwreck which menaced young Harry Crombie.

Some nine or ten nights before he had been attacked by a couple of ruffians in a quiet street of his native city.

They had overpowered him, and then forced him on board the schooner which was ready to sail.

During the voyage he had been kept a prisoner in the skipper's cabin.

It was the latter with one of the crew who had attacked him.

And now they had brought him on deck with the intention of dropping him overboard to perish in the night darkness and the clamor of the raging storm.

They would no doubt have cast him adrift sooner, only they would not risk the possibility of his being picked up by some vessel in that ocean highway frequented by countless fruit-boats and various coasting crafts.

The captain of the Gulf Queen was an individual of ordinary appearance, rather above medium height, and extremely lean of frame, with immense muscular strength.

He had a bristling shock of sandy hair, while a thick beard of the same pale reddish hue concealed all the lower portion of his features.

A casual observer would have noticed about Amos Slycraft nothing which might especially suggest the villain.

On second glance one might remark his shifty eyes, and a certain stealthiness in his air and movements.

In fact, although he had been charged with some small irregularities in his dealings, he had not as yet been suspected of any very serious offenses.

He had secured his young captive with great caution.

The boy's ankles were shackled by iron chains, while a strong rope pinioned his arms across his back.

The light from a large portable lantern revealed the fine proportions of Harry's figure as he stood there proudly erect, with his expressive eyes fixed piercingly upon the skipper's uneasy countenance.

"Who hired you to do this contemptible job, Slycraft? You don't look particularly hilarious about it, anyhow. But I don't wonder you feel rather small, cap. I'm not surprised you act as if you were stealing sheep. By the great living jingo! I'd rather go to the bottom than to have the hang-dog phiz you've got."

Harry spoke as coolly as if he were discussing the most pleasant of topics with one of his own boy comrades back in his New York home.

That wonderful composure was most exasperating to Captain Amos Slycraft.

"If ye won't button up that unruly lip of your'n, I'll make ye," he snarled.

He directed a savage blow at his prisoner.

Harry adroitly dodged it, bound as he was.

"Wall, ye won't be so all-fired gabby in a minnit, I reckon, when I'm done with ye," growled the skipper.

He appeared to be waiting for one of his crew, who had gone down the cabin ladder a moment before.

"See here, captain," the young captive persisted, "it was Darcy Freel who hired you to get me out of the way, wasn't it? What is Darcy Freel afraid of me for, anyhow?"

"Wall, if ye don't beat all creation with that 'ar curionsness of your'n! But tain't no kind of use quizzing of me. I hain't going to satisfy ye by letting no cat out of the bag. Tain't my nature."

"I've got all the answer I need. I see that Darcy Freel is the principal in this infamous job, just as I thought," Harry said, quietly.

"Ain't ye going to shet down that talking hatch of your'n? I reckon it's time I took the wind out of your sails, my young lubber," the skipper blustered.

He beckoned to one of the crew, who had been loitering not far away, and who had been quietly observant of the scene.

This seaman was a queer looking personage, with powerful shoulders much bent, and with short bow-legs supporting his muscular body.

His broad shoulders were surmounted by an immense head, covered by kinky, grizzled hair.

He wore a big beard of the same description, which had evidently never been subjected to the action of a razor.

A pair of wonderfully brilliant eyes, of the keenest and most vivid blue, looked forth from behind smoke-colored spectacles.

It was his first voyage on the Gulf Queen, and his services were secured only on condition that he should be allowed to bring his dog--a huge mastiff of remarkable intelligence, called Demon.

This big mastiff, Demon, was as singular in his looks and ways as his master; and both held aloof from the others on board.

The man was an excellent seaman; but nothing was known of his antecedents.

His name, or the part which had been ascertained, was Jarl. To this his companions in good-humored banter had prefixed the appellation of "Bandy."

At the skipper's signal, Bandy Jarl came forward at once.

Harry noticed that he walked with the rolling gait of the true son of Neptune.

"Well, sir?" he said to Slycraft.

"Send a hand here, mate, and help me heave this pizen lubber overboard," the skipper replied.

The queer old sailor had doffed his cap, and stood holding it respectfully in one hand.

"I'll tend to this 'ere chap, captain. And excuse me, sir, for me warning yer, as 'taint my dooty."

"There's a strange craft, sir, kiting right erlong arter us astern, and has been, sir, for ther last haffern hour."

"A strange craft? That's mighty currus. How in thunderation do you know anything about it?" the skipper growled, doubtfully.

"I've foller'd the sea fer nigh fifty year, sir. My eyes kin see and my ears kin hear with tolerable kerrectness yet, sir," Bandy Jarl answered.

At that juncture the lookout from his perch aloft shouted through his trumpet:

"Sail, ho!"

Slycraft moved a few paces away from his prisoner.

His back was turned for a brief moment.

But brief as it was, it afforded Bandy Jarl an opportunity to tamper with the captive's shackles.

He had barely finished a certain dexterous operation, when Slycraft whirled toward him.

"Over with that 'ar young lubber. Thar ain't no time fer fooling. Ketch hold of his legs, Bandy. That's the tack. Heave erway."

Bandy Jarl performed his share of the task with extraordinary care.

He was afraid the unlocked chain would drop before the captive touched the water, beyond the sight of the skipper's lynx eyes.

It kept its place, however.

And the next instant Harry Crombie was hurled head foremost into the boiling waves.

He was cast adrift in the night and storm, miles and miles from the nearest land.

The time and place chosen for the diabolical deed were such that he would not have the smallest chance for life—or, at least, so the evil skipper believed.

CHAPTER II.

A MODERN SEA-ROBBER.

"WHAT in thunderation be ye after? Ye ain't no pirates, be ye?"

The inquiry was stammered forth in a dazed manner by Captain Amos Slycraft.

At the consummation of his atrocious act, he had turned hastily toward the opposite end of the vessel.

At the second step he had stopped, stock-still and rigid, as if struck by an electric bolt.

Climbing nimbly over the schooner's rail, he beheld half a dozen strange, swarthy men, dressed in some glittering barbaric fashion, and armed to the teeth.

For a moment the astonished skipper could only stand and glare in blank silence at the singular invaders.

The extraordinary spectacle had stricken him dumb.

At length he managed to blurt forth the query just recorded.

With the words he glanced around for Bandy Jarl, as if entreating the shrewd old sailor's mediation.

To his surprise, the latter and the mastiff Demon had both suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

Slycraft's bulging eyes wandered back fearfully to the band of piratical-looking intruders.

They had all gained the deck, except a pair of oarsmen, who remained in the jolly boat, which lay alongside the Gulf Queen.

The six who had boarded the schooner were advancing in line, moving with almost military precision, while they fairly bristled from crown to heel with guns and murderous looking bowies.

The Gulf Queen was beginning to forge dangerously, plunging from side to side like a riderless steed, while her crew was huddled together in the bow, neglectful of their duties, in their dismay at the astonishing invasion.

The leader of the band stepped out of the line and approached Captain Slycraft.

He was considerably taller than his companions, who were all low-sized and stocky of build.

His frame showed more symmetry; and he had the thews and sinews of a Hercules.

His skin was dark as that of a mulatto; but his features were aquiline and finely molded. He had flashing black eyes, and the ends of his long, raven-black mustache were pointed and curled carefully upward.

His trousers were of black velvet, striped with gold braid at the outside seams. Over a blouse of spotless white flannel he wore a short jacket of black velvet, edged with gold fringe and closed with gold buttons, each of which held a single diamond like a point of flame.

A white silk handkerchief was tied in a loose sailor's knot at the broad collar of his blouse, and the knot held a superb cluster of diamonds.

Over his curly, raven-black hair was jauntily set a curious sort of gold-tasseled cap, made of blood-red silk.

This cap was adorned by a cormorant's head placed just above the narrow visor.

By this peculiar cap he was known as the "Red Cormorant," a Portuguese outlaw, and a freebooter and smuggler, who frequented the various straits and islands between the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

His true name was Pietro Parza. His family in Portugal was respectable and well-to-do; and he had been educated for the legal profession.

But he preferred a different and less honorable career. And although not yet twenty-five years of age, he had made the name of the Red Cormorant notorious by his countless deeds of wicked adventures and reckless daring.

As he stood there on the schooner's deck in the clear radiance of the sperm oil lantern, he looked a true picture of the typical sea robber and lawless rover of the deep.

He addressed the cowering Slycraft with a mocking smile, which displayed a superb set of dazzling white teeth.

"I perceive that you recognize me, captain," he remarked.

The red cap with the cormorant's head was recognized by Slycraft the instant that the tall wearer had stepped within the range of light.

"What does ye want with sech as me? I do honest dickering. I don't do nothing agin the law, ner tote no stuff of valer," he answered, sullenly.

The Red Cormorant smiled again with an exasperating expression, which was alike knowing and incredulous.

"So you haven't any prize live stock aboard—something which represents half a million dollars more or less?" said he.

"I don't tote no stock, nuther dead ner kicking. And I don't know nothing no prize critters," the skipper growled, in kindling fury.

The Red Cormorant changed his air of raillery for one of ominous severity.

"I see I must speak more plainly, you thick-skulled blockhead. No doubt you will understand when I tell you that I want your prisoner."

"I hain't got no prisoner."

Slycraft grinned with malicious triumph.

"Don't you lie to me, you scoundrel, or it will be worse for you. I want that boy."

"I hain't got no boy aboard this 'ere craft. Who be ye raising sech old Cain about, anyhow?"

"You know well enough who I mean. I want the boy you kidnapped in New York. I have sworn to thwart Darcy Freel, and I will abide by my oath. You will be wise to turn your prisoner over to me without further parley."

"And I tell ye agin I haint got no boy, nuther no prisoner. Ye kin search the scow from stern to stern fer all I care. Ye won't get nothing ner nobody."

A shapely hand blazing with diamonds fell upon Slycraft like a trip-hammer.

A set of steely digits fastened upon his collar.

He was shaken to and fro as a terrier shakes a rat.

"What have you done with young Crombie? I want the truth and the whole truth without quibbling and at once. If you attempt any nonsense, I'll send you and your vessel to the bottom together."

Slycraft was a coward as well as a rascal.

When his tormentor finally allowed him a chance to recover his breath he whined forth a confession of the whole affair.

"I might have known you'd done something of the kind, you infernal hypocrite."

"By the skull and cross-bones! I've a good mind to chain you to the mainmast and scuttle your old tub under you."

With that Parza flung the abject wretch contemptuously from him.

He swung around on his heel as carelessly as if he were treading the floor of a ball-room.

"Come, mates," he said to his men.

He vaulted over the schooner's rail like an acrobat, with his companions close behind him.

By the time Slycraft had scrambled up from the deck where he had fallen like a log, the band of lawless sea rovers were a dozen boat-lengths distant.

Parza's own vessel was also a schooner, but it was a very different craft from the sluggish Gulf Queen.

The Onward Bound, as her commander had named her, was long and narrow and of the most graceful outlines.

She was painted an ivory white, with a broad band of dead gold along her sides.

She was easily handled and swift as the wind, and she floated the stormiest seas as buoyantly and safely as a toy of rubber and air.

There was nothing in her appearance to indicate that she was a free lance of the seas.

Her commander realized that the pirate's halcyon days were over, and he was too wary and cunning to flaunt the black flag after the fashion of the bold sea robbers of song and story.

Nor did he attempt to plunder any treasure laden craft upon the high seas, nor in any other place.

He had different and far more subtle methods of piracy, which his present undertaking might serve to illustrate.

Only in his efforts to thwart the individual mentioned as Darcy Freel he was actuated by a spirit of revenge no less than by a greed for gold.

In getting the boy Harry Crombie into his clutches, he would also get Darcy Freel in his power.

Freel was enjoying a luxurious income from a rich estate which rightfully belonged to young Crombie.

Freel's father, as administrator of the estate, had fraudulently withheld the boy's inheritance from him.

Harry had been placed in the care of a simple-minded old job carpenter, to learn the trade and to earn his own living.

Within the last few months the defrauded young heir had somehow discovered an inkling of the truth.

He had pondered over the discovery, and at length he determined to have the matter investigated by a discreet and competent lawyer who had shown an interest in his welfare.

He was on his way to consult that gentleman by appointment, when he was attacked and dragged on board the Gulf Queen.

Pietro Parza had his own subtle devices whereby he unearthed not a few transactions of the kind which had enriched Darcy Freel.

And he also knew how to make these peculiar transactions a source of abundant profit to himself.

In this case his profit would have been combined with keen, vengeful satisfaction.

It was no pity for the wronged and helpless boy which had influenced him in his present movements.

As the jolly boat bore him back to the Onward Bound, he gritted his superb white teeth in fury over his balked designs.

"If I had only got hold of that infernal young lubber, I'd have taken the wind out of Dandy Darcy's sails.

"He wouldn't again set his fine club cronies to snubbing and blackballing me when I wanted to steer into society up there amidst the trim Yankee craft.

"I must tack for another port, for I'm bound to expose his rotten timbers. I'll get even with him for putting in his oar against me."

The Red Cormorant was thus meditating when his sharp and well-trained eyes caught the glimpse of a yawl making its way through the angry waves a couple of hundred feet off his own starboard.

He gazed at it searchingly through the gloom for several minutes. Then a triumphant ejaculation broke from his lips.

"It's the yawl from the Gulf Queen!

"It's old Bandy Jarl rowing, and I can see a dark object in the bottom of the boat.

"It is the boy without doubt; and the old sailor is taking him to some secret retreat, probably among the Tortugas Islands.

"We must overhaul them, mates. Pull away with a will. There's a half million for my bold lads to share, when the young land lubber is safe in the strong room under the cockpit of the Onward Bound."

Although Parza was by birth and education a Portuguese, he spoke English excellently well, and preferred it rather than his own native tongue.

With a suppressed cheer for their commander, and with a low-toned "Ye-ho!" his men now bent to their oars at his injunction.

The short southern gale had abated. The tossing billows were subsiding.

The jolly boat shot away like an arrow in pursuit of the fleeing yawl.

"In three minutes the boy will be our prize, mates. And we shall know how to take care of him," Parza said, presently.

The free-rover chieftain was watching the race with triumph in his flashing black eyes.

It was evident that old Bandy Jarl was rowing his best and fastest. The yawl too was much the smaller and the lighter boat.

But he was outnumbered nearly two to one by younger and more vigorous men.

There could be but one result possible in such an unequal contest.

The gallant old sailor soon realized that his pursuers must inevitably overhaul him.

He ceased his desperate efforts and held his boat stationary, waiting for them to row alongside.

At this sign of surrender a fierce yell of exultation broke from the swarthy throats of the lawless sea rovers.

"I got the boy, after all," the Red Cormorant exclaimed in high glee at his easy victory.

CHAPTER III.

YOUNG KING CRUSOE.

SHACKLED at ankles and wrists, and hurled overboard into the boiling ocean swells at midnight!

It would have been a fatal experience for young Harry Crombie only for the timely intervention of the shrewd old sailor.

Bandy Jarl, by his wonderfully expeditious action, had managed to partially foil the evil schemes of his inhuman captain.

The agile old seaman had unfastened the chain around Harry's ankles, and had cut the ropes about his arms down to a single thin strand.

As the villainous skipper flung him head foremost into the seething waves, the chain dropped from his limbs.

A sharp jerk of his arms upon the rope broke the remaining strand.

And instead of sinking to the bottom helplessly, as Slycraft believed he should do, he stretched his disengaged muscles and swam rapidly away from the spot.

Luckily for the boy he was an accomplished swimmer and a tireless one.

He dared not hope to reach land, the nearest point of which must be at least twenty miles distant to the north.

But he thought he might be able to keep afloat until he should be rescued by some vessel passing through the straits.

He was wise enough not to exhaust himself by continued exertion. After swimming a safe distance from the schooner, he rolled over on his back and let the tide carry him as it would.

The tide was rolling in towards shore, and for a time he made some slow progress in that direction.

And as the water of the strait was warm, he was not likely to suffer much serious discomfort from a prolonged immersion.

His immediate cause of anxiety was of sharks, which were numerous in certain portions of those waters.

It was a horrible sensation to feel that at any moment a pair of those deadly jaws might close upon his shuddering flesh and drag him down to destruction.

He was not aware that Bandy Jarl had quietly gotten a boat in readiness to follow and rescue him.

As it happened, the kind-hearted old sailor failed to trace him on his watery path.

Jarl had not dared to shout.

Slycraft would have been likely to hear him, and suspect his purpose.

In that case the rascally skipper would, no doubt, have attempted to force him back on board the Gulf Queen.

And by the time the old sailor had rowed beyond the schooner's sight and hearing, Harry had drifted a mile or more away.

All the remainder of that fearful night, the boy alternately swam and floated, and always in the direction of the far-off land to the northward.

Once during the night something chill and slimy to the touch struck against his hand.

For an instant a tremor of fear ran through his frame.

His first thought was of the dreaded, deadly shark.

But it proved to be a plank, water-soaked, and covered with moss and seaweed.

The plank was some slight support to his almost exhausted body.

It helped too in reviving his courage, which had failed him more and more as the moments lagged by, each seemingly an age.

When the dawn began to show its first light along the east, he could see nothing but the watery waste stretching away in every direction.

His straining eyes could detect no sign of land.

Far off to the south he could distinguish a single sail no larger than his hand apparently, and nearer a coil of smoke from the funnel of some steamer.

As the light increased he could discern a low line of dark coast along the northern horizon.

Less distant he could see here and there a black object looming against the sky, which was presently revealed as a rocky islet or key.

But he began to doubt that he should be able to reach even one of those barren reefs.

He closed his eyes despairingly and allowed the tide to bear him as it would.

How long he lay thus he did not know. He only felt that further struggle would be useless; that he was doomed to perish unless some miracle intervened to save him.

He was becoming delirious from want of food and the long-continued mental and physical strain.

He scarcely had sufficient strength and sense to retain his hold upon the plank.

A few hours more, perhaps only a few minutes, and all would be over.

The plank would slip away, the waters would close over him, and that would be the end.

From this lethargy he was aroused with a shock—a sensation of being lifted in space, and then of being flung forward upon some jagged surface so violently that the breath was nearly jarred from his body!

A long roller had borne him aloft on its frothy crest, and hurled him upon the rocky edge of a key, or small islet, a large number of which stud that portion of those waters from the Tortugas group to the Bahamas.

Harry was conscious of the sudden strange shock and jar, and then for a time all was a blank.

For quite a little time he lay there insensible.

He was aroused at last by the sun pouring its hot rays full upon his unprotected head and face.

His first sane and lucid sensation was of an intolerable thirst.

He struggled to his feet with the utmost difficulty.

His limbs were stiff, his whole body felt bruised and sore, and he ached in every joint.

He reeled as he walked, and every step caused him pain.

After a few paces his eyes were gladdened by the sight of a crystal spring gushing from a mossy fissure in a low, rocky crag, some fifty feet back from the beach of the islet.

More dead than alive, the young castaway crept to the pool of sweet, cool water collected in a hollow of the rock at the bottom of the crag.

He drank his fill, and soon felt a new life coursing through his veins.

While he lingered at the spring he heard the rustle of foliage, although he could see no sign of vegetation beyond the tufts of grasses growing from the crevices in the rock close to the gushing water.

With his reviving strength he began to feel a natural curiosity concerning the strange islet upon which he had been cast.

After crossing an irregular ridge of coral formation on a line with the crag, a surprising scene was revealed to his brightening eyes.

Before him stretched a verdant depression of ground, showing a

luxuriant growth of orange and banana trees, and fringed with a wilderness of southern blossoms.

This fairy valley was long and narrow, and embraced some five or six acres.

It was traversed by a winding brook, which gurgled and sparkled between banks of brilliant flowers.

After satisfying his hunger by a supply of banana fruit, Harry started to further explore the singular key.

Its highest point was a barren peak a half a mile or so from the spot where he had been drifted ashore.

The summit commanded a plain view of the entire reef, which was long and narrow and shaped like an irregular crescent, or like a sickle rather, with a bit of handle bent backward.

Where this handle turned back upon the convex side of the bow of the sickle was a deep basin or harbor, surrounded and concealed by a dense skirt of tropic trees and shrubs.

The average width of this singularly-shaped islet or key was about a furlong. At its widest part it was double that, or about a quarter of a mile.

Its length was rather more than three miles from what might be described as the point of the sickle blade to the extremity of its handle.

At its narrowest portion there were less than fifty feet of coral ridge from beach to beach.

This ridge made a high barren rim along both shores of the key from end to end.

Thus all the green groves and trees and luxuriant tropical vegetation were almost completely shut in from the view of any passing vessel.

There was nothing to tempt navigators ashore. They would have seen only a curiously curved zigzag of bare rock rising out of the water, but that was all.

At least that was all, with the single exception of the tiny, grove-encircled harbor at one far end.

But the fear of treacherous, outlying rocks below the surface of the water would have deterred vessels from attempting to anchor in that natural haven.

Harry, surveying the key from the highest peak of the ridge, judged rightly that it was far outside the track of the craft passing through the Florida straits.

"I may wait in vain for the appearance of a sail or of a smoke-stack until I have grown old and gray," he said to himself.

He had explored the key far enough to convince him that he was alone upon it.

He had discovered nothing to indicate the presence of man.

"I am monarch of all I survey. I am another Crusoe, and I may be obliged to stay here years and years," he thought, dejectedly.

He descended from the summit and continued his way along the high ridge.

All down the inner slope were groves of palmetto trees, with clumps of plantain, or open spaces covered with pineapples, interspersed with tropical fruits and flowers which were strange to him.

In spots the coral formation pushed itself in huge, glistening, white masses, through the rich green verdure.

And here and there along the inner slope, a cavern extended far back into the depths of the rocky ridge.

The general direction or trend of the key was north-east and south-west.

The basin or harbor mentioned was in the more southerly extremity.

This fairy harbor attracted the young castaway and he started to explore it.

Across from it, on the opposite beach, he had discerned an immense black object which appeared to be the bulk of a wrecked ship as he approached more closely.

Desiring a nearer view he directed his steps down the outer side of the ridge.

He had gone but a few paces when he heard a sudden rattle of gravel and loose earth somewhere behind him.

He stopped as if shot.

He could not help feeling some consternation, as it was the first sound he had heard except that made by his own footsteps.

As he turned back he was startled by the threatening snarl of some enraged animal.

It was peculiarly fierce and loud, and unlike anything he had ever heard anywhere before.

There was a sudden rustling among the vines at an opening in the rocks which he had just passed.

The next instant the unarmed boy was confronted by the most hideous brute upon which his eyes had ever lighted.

CHAPTER IV.

SLYCRAFT SCORES A POINT.

"Er boy? Great Gibraltar! Mebbe it's Moses in ther bulrushes yeou aire arter?"

"Humsoever, I ain't seen no jib of that cut. Yeou aire pulling fer the wrong point of the compass, stranger."

Thus quoth Bandy Jarl in answer to the questions of his pursuers.

The old sailor was very glad at the moment that he had chanced to miss the young castaway.

He was not very much disturbed by the menacing aspect of the formidable Red Cormorant.

"Don't you belong to the Gulf Queen?" the free rover chieftain demanded.

"Yaw, I does, sir," the old tar admitted, cheerfully.

"Well, what are you doing out here in the small boat away from the schooner?"

"Man overboard, sir."

"Oh, there was?"

"Yaw, sir."

"What have you got in the bottom of your boat here?"

The gale had been of short duration. The waves had subsided to such a degree that the boats were able to lie side by side without risking any serious danger from lurching one against the other.

As Parza spoke he stooped toward the yawl's rail.

In an instant the dark object in the bottom became animate.

There was a savage yelp, and an immense dog raised on its haunches from beneath an old tarpaulin.

The animal was as remarkable in its appearance as was its master. It was a pure blooded mastiff with a leonine head and shoulders, and with an uncommon look of ferocity and brute strength.

Its singular appearance was caused mostly by its color.

This was dark brown on the hind part of the body, shading to a dull, tawny hue over the shoulders, while the face was nearly white with the bristling yellow whiskers of an Asiatic lion.

At sight of its fierce eyes and gleaming fangs, Parza retreated with an oath.

As he stepped back he drew his ready revolver and aimed at the mastiff's jaws.

"Down, demon, down!" shouted the old sailor.

The intelligent beast crouched into the lowest corner of the boat, and the bullet whistled harmlessly away into empty space.

At the same instant Bandy Jarl backed off the yawl with the intention apparently of rowing away altogether.

"Stop!" thundered the Red Cormorant.

"We must take charge of that mysterious old cruiser, lads. He means mischief of some kind, sure," he added to his companions.

The free rovers bent to their oars.

It needed but a few strokes to again overhaul the old seaman.

"Haul down your colors, old graybeard. I have safe quarters on board my craft over yonder for such suspicious water tramps as you," called the rover chieftain.

Bandy Jarl ceased rowing.

But it was not to surrender.

Suddenly, with a fine seven-shooter in each hand, he arose in the boat and faced his pursuers.

"Avaunt, yeou pirate sharks!" he roared, in angry defiance.

"Yeou may take me if yeou kin, and if yeou hanker arter gitting them derned hulks of your'n loaded chock full of cold lead."

"I've got just fourteen peppercorns in these 'ere leetle guns, and I shan't waste none."

"I'm an old Yankee salt, I am, and I ain't the kind of whale yeou kin harpoon without a tussle, and a mighty lively one at that."

"But ef yeou aire yarning tew git your timbers drilled with bullets astem and astarn, aloft and alow, I'm ready fer yeou."

The Red Cormorant band hesitated.

It was plain enough that the old sailor was in dead earnest.

They could overpower him of course after a little struggle.

But that struggle would cost the lives of some of them—perhaps of several.

And the advantage to be gained by making old Jarl a prisoner was not worth such bloodshed.

And besides, although they were men of lawless lives, they were also brave and admired bravery in another.

And there was something heroic in the attitude of the grayhaired, bow-legged old sailor as he stood there defying them.

"Reef your sails, Jack; you're spreading more canvas than the occasion warrants."

"We don't shed blood for a trifile. And if you won't come with us peaceably, we'll have to let you go."

"Only, if we find out that you're a spy in the wake of the Onward Bound, you won't get off so easy next time."

As the rover chieftain spoke, he saluted Bandy Jarl by a wave of his diamond-adorned hand.

Before the old sailor recovered from his surprise at their abrupt change of tactics, the jolly boat was a dozen lengths away, speeding toward the white and gold craft anchored in the distance.

Old Jarl then resumed his search for the young castaway.

As the hours elapsed he relinquished all hope of young Crombie being alive.

"The youngster is went tew the bottom like his father afore him," Bandy Jarl said to himself.

"It were jest erbout here in this 'ere very pond that Walter Crombie's bark struck agin a reef in a tornader and foundered."

"It were a mighty currus thing erbout Watty's chest of valerale stuff; 'twan't on the bark, erllowing all infirmation tew be kerrect."

"The whole ternal cartastrophy, so fer as told, were powerful currus. That 'ar Slycraft could make a pint or two clar, according tew my reckoning. He's er skalawag, sly by name and sly by natur, ef I'm any jedge."

"Wall, ef I'm tew spike his guns and pervert any more shams and dervices of hissen and of Darcy Free!, I must steer my perceedings intew another line of action."

"But whar's the use? The boy's dead, sure and sartain. Ef he'd been erfloat I'd hev picked him up afore now. He could swim tew like er porpus; but mebbe 'twere cramps, and mebbe 'twere the tarnation sharks."

Jarl and young Crombie's father had been shipmates during the lifetime of the latter.

They had never been separated until Crombie's last voyage.

He had taken command of a fine bark, and was homeward bound from South America and the West Indies, when his vessel went down in a terrible hurricane which swept through the Florida Straits.

A number of the crew were rescued by a small Cuban vessel. But Captain Crombie, with the others, perished.

He was bringing home with him a chest filled with treasure, which he had collected during his previous voyages.

What became of this chest was a mystery.

The survivors were positive that it was on board when they sailed from the last port where they had stopped for cargo. They were equally positive that it was not on board when the bark foundered, nor for at least a day before.

None of them had the slightest knowledge farther concerning it.

Amos Slycraft had been the boatswain of the unfortunate bark. But he professed to be as ignorant as the rest.

It was not until within the last few months that the old sailor learned how his old shipmate's son was being wronged.

Even then he had no proof which would be regarded as valid by a court of law.

All he could do was to watch the movements of the guilty parties until he should secure the evidence required.

To do this he shipped on the Gulf Queen.

At the time he had only partly suspected the more recent wrongs conspired against young Crombie.

He was three days from port before he discovered that the boy was a prisoner on board.

He became doubly alert, and he soon learned how the inhuman Slycraft intended to dispose of the helpless captive.

He at once made arrangements to frustrate the diabolical plot and to save the boy.

He quietly set to work to put the small yawl in readiness for instant use.

He had done this so adroitly that the boat was in the water in less than three minutes after they had hurled the young prisoner overboard.

Bandy Jarl rowed hither and thither until broad daylight.

Of course he had detected no signs of Harry.

Finally he landed upon a small island, or reef, where he kindled a fire from the driftwood on the beach, and prepared to refresh himself from the stores he had brought with him in the yawl.

After a breakfast of coffee and hard tack he lay down in the shade of a palmetto tree, and was soon sleeping soundly.

He was awakened about noon by a low growl from Demon, and by the dog pulling excitedly at his clothing.

He sat upright, yawning and rubbing his eyes.

For a moment he could hardly understand where he was.

But a glance seaward aroused all his faculties in a trice.

A boat manned by three or four strong rowers was swiftly scudding away from the reef, towing the yawl which he had drawn up on the beach for safety.

The boat was heading for a schooner which lay a half mile distant. It was the Gulf Queen.

By some means he had been discovered on the reef.

Slycraft had robbed him of the yawl.

They had left him without provisions or water, or any means of sustaining life.

He was a prisoner on less than an acre of barren rock, surrounded by a waste of briny sea.

Slycraft had taken one trick of the game.

CHAPTER V.

A WONDERFUL DISCOVERY.

An unexpected and terrible danger had suddenly beset the young castaway.

He had no weapon with which to defend himself from the enraged monster.

At that spot flight was scarcely possible, the descent being too steep and uneven for swift movement.

The creature had halted a few paces from him, and stood ready for a charge, its eyes bloodshot and its powerful jaws dripping with the froth of rage.

As Harry looked at it more closely, he saw that it was a wild hog. Not of the sort which rove the tropic forests in droves, but an animal much larger and ferocious and a great deal more formidable.

The thought occurred to him that it must have escaped from some wrecked vessel when it was an exceedingly young animal, and that its extraordinary ferocity was owing to its unnatural condition of food and solitude.

Harry was right, no doubt, on that point.

But remoteness from man and its own kind had combined with various influences in developing a singular brute.

Its long, tall frame was so thin as to be literally slab-like; while the length of its legs suggested stilts.

Its whole body was covered with kinky, shaggy, black hair. And it was as supple and restlessly nervous in its movements as a Yorkshire terrier.

Its head was ugly beyond all description. The snout was tremendously long and powerful; and the huge tusks curved downward with points as sharp as needles.

Its immense ears flapped like those of an elephant; while its little

red eyes twinkled and blinked with a frightfully malicious and cunning expression.

Such was the hideous monster which confronted the unarmed young castaway.

For a moment it crouched on its haunches, grinding its tusks, and now and then emitting that curious roar.

During that brief instant Harry darted a swift glance around, searching for something which he might use to defend himself.

Fortune favored him.

A few feet away he espied a stout stick with a sharp, broken end.

He succeeded in reaching it; but the movement freshly incensed the brute and hastened the attack.

His hand had barely closed upon the cudgel when the monster charged upon him.

It was like the rush of a cyclone.

But the boy kept his wits about him.

Watching a favorable chance he hurled the stick forward like a lance, striking the sharp end plump into the brute's distended jaws.

Harry exerted every atom of strength he possessed.

The stick penetrated deep into the creature's throat, almost pinning its head to the ground.

It roared with a frenzy of pain and rage, and writhed vainly to dislodge the torturing spear.

It twisted and floundered from side to side, striking its forefeet viciously at the stake, while the blood spurted in a torrent from its open jaws.

Suddenly in its frantic writhings it turned a complete somersault, falling on its back halfway down the steep declivity.

There was a convulsive shiver of the brute's whole frame.

Then it lay motionless and rigid.

After several minutes, during which there was no sign of life, Harry ventured to approach it.

He saw that it was quite dead.

It had broken its neck by the fall, and, besides, the sharp, lance-like point of the stake had penetrated the jugular vein.

After that exciting encounter, Harry deferred his trip to the harbor and the wreck.

He feared that there might be more savage animals on the island, and he immediately began to contrive weapons with which to defend himself.

There was a small tree growing in places, the wood of which was peculiarly tough and elastic, and admirably suited for spears and similar articles.

Harry's only implement was his jack-knife. But it was large and double-bladed, besides being of the very best material and manufacture.

Harry's first effort in the line of weapons was a spear fashioned from the tough wood just mentioned.

After he had finished it he practiced throwing it at a target until he had become surprisingly expert in its use.

Meantime, he also fashioned a bow and arrows.

The arrows he tipped with flinty fragments of sharp stone he found along the beach.

The cord for the bow he made from the sinews of the wild hog he had slain.

He was naturally ingenious, and he soon began to enjoy the work of contriving the various articles which were necessary to his comfort or safety.

And then in his strolls along the shore he found a number of useful things which had been washed up by the sea.

Among these was an iron hammer head and a large hatchet, nearly new.

Over these latter he was jubilant.

While he was thus occupied several weeks elapsed.

Finally he concluded one morning to undertake his long-delayed expedition to the wreck.

It was nearly two miles from the hut he had erected for himself beside the little stream on the slope of the valley he had first discovered.

This slope was surmounted by the high peak whence he could command a view of the entire key.

It was mostly for this reason he had selected that particular spot for his cabin.

He spent many hours on the summit straining his wistful eyes over the wide expanse of briny waters, searching for some sign of a passing vessel.

On the apex he had set the stem of a palmetto sapling to serve as a flagstaff.

Upon the top of the pole he had fastened a couple of yards of half rotted old canvas which he had picked up on the shore.

It was his flag of distress, which he hoped might some time be sighted by some vessel and thus attract somebody to his assistance.

That morning Harry took his usual survey of the broad encircling waters.

But no sail, no plume of smoke appeared within his range of vision.

He started then for the wreck, making his way along the ridge which skirted that side of the key.

The hulk lay with its prow high upon the sand.

With the outer planking torn from its frame it looked like the skeleton of some great, black-ribbed Leviathan.

As Harry neared it he was surprised to see that much of the upper portion of the vessel remained intact.

While the prow lay high on the beach the after part was sunk deep in the sand, which had in a measure protected the timbers from the wind and weather.

The stub of her mizzen mast protruded above the sand, which had been swept in drifts over the stern during gales and storms.

The hatches had all been wrested off, probably by the tempest which had dismasted her.

The steps descending to the half-buried cabin had partly rotted away.

But Harry's curiosity prompted him to attempt to clamber down to the interior.

He effected it more easily than he had expected. But at first glance the cabin appeared to contain nothing worth the exertion.

Its fittings and furniture were all crumbled away from the corrosive action of the salt water.

He discovered nothing of interest in the lockers.

The last and largest he opened was in a better state of preservation, and inside was a large volume which attracted his attention.

It was bound in plain red leather, and appeared to have been used partly as a diary and partly for memoranda.

The pages were yellow with age and discolored here and there in blotches. But the ink had not faded greatly, and except in a few spots the writing was perfectly legible.

The first page disclosed the names of the wreck and her commander.

As Harry grasped the import of what he read, he stared in wonder. Then he brushed his hands across his eyes and stared again.

But there was no mistake.

The wreck was the remains of the bark *Brazilius*, commanded by Captain Walter Crombie.

It was the vessel on which his father perished.

It was some minutes before the boy could master his overwhelming agitation.

It was with the most intense interest he finally resumed the perusal of the events recorded by the hand of his dead father.

Over the last entry of all, written evidently only a few hours before the vessel went down, the young castaway fairly trembled with his excitement.

It seemed that Captain Crombie had detected a conspiracy between his boatswain and some of his crew.

This boatswain was Amos Slycraft.

They had plotted to set him adrift, and to put the faithful members of the crew in chains.

Then they would capture the bark and get possession of a chest of treasure which he had on board.

To outwit the conspirators and to save his treasure, Captain Crombie sailed his vessel out of her course, steering for a small island which was unknown to most navigators.

Fortunately for his purpose, they were beset by a dead calm when a mile off Falcon Key, as the island was called.

In the middle of the night he lowered a small boat and rowed to the key, where he buried his treasure chest.

He had executed this maneuver so shrewdly and quickly that none of the conspirators suspected what he had done.

Shortly after he regained his becalmed vessel there was a sudden gale, portending a furious hurricane.

The allusion to the gale was the last words Captain Crombie had written.

It was in the hurricane succeeding the dead calm that his doomed vessel struck upon the sunken rock.

According to the statement of the survivors, the *Brazilius* did not sink immediately. On the contrary, she floated some little time, drifting a mile or so from the place of disaster.

This fact was recalled by Harry a moment later.

With Captain Crombie's record of events, there was a chart of Falcon Key, showing where the treasure chest was buried.

As Harry examined it, he suddenly uttered an excited ejaculation.

In the carefully drawn map he plainly recognized the peculiar and unmistakable outlines of the reef upon which he was at the very moment a sea-bound prisoner.

"Why, this is Falcon Key!" he exclaimed aloud, "and it is across yonder by the harbor somewhere that the chest is buried. After striking the rock, the *Brazilius* must have drifted back in the gale, to be finally swept upon the beach of the island as the hulk now lies."

He took the precious volume and clambered out of the cabin.

He felt all the natural impatience of a boy to inspect the place marked on the chart as the spot where the chest was buried.

As he climbed down the side of the hulk, he was astounded by hearing the sound of human voices.

Obeying some sudden impulse of caution he darted behind a great sand-drift piled against the wreck.

From this concealment he peered down the beach whence the sound proceeded.

He saw a party of four men approaching.

The foremost was tall and sinewy, with a dark, bold, evil face and flashing black eyes.

He wore a picturesque garb of black velvet, braided and tasseled with gold.

His cap was queerly shaped of some crimson silk fabric, and surmounted above the visor by the head and wing-tips of a cormorant.

He was Pietro Parza, the Red Cormorant chieftain.

The young castaway, who had never seen nor heard of him before, gazed at him with interest.

The other three were Portuguese sailors.

All the party carried spades, and a couple of them also carried ropes and chains.

The free rover chief had recently obtained from Slycraft some infor-

mation regarding the treasure chest and the movements of the bark on the night of the hurricane.

He was far more astute than Slycraft, and he at once suspected something of the truth.

Being as covetous as he was cunning, he immediately resolved to search for the treasure.

Harry, hidden behind the great bank of sand, could plainly hear the conversation of the men as they advanced.

"There is no doubt of this being the wreck of the *Brazilius*. If the wonderful chest is not in her cabin, we shall find something to tell us where it was hidden," said Parza.

The startled young castaway hugged his precious volume the more closely.

He glanced wildly about him, looking for some way to escape without being observed.

If he should be discovered by those determined men, knowing what he did, he felt that they would kill him with as little hesitation as they would crush an insect in their path.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE CORMORANT'S TALONS.

"I RECKON, Demon, me and yeou hain't going tew weather this 'ere blast. I calcarlate this aire our last arthy cruise. The onlucky timbers of our mortal carcasses is going tew bleach and tarn tew dust right 'ere on this infarnal leetle apolergy of an island."

Thus Bandy Jarl remarked to his canine companion as he watched the twice stolen yawl being towed away by the cunning Slycraft.

He believed that it would be impossible to survive for more than a few days on the barren reef.

It was a mere dot in the broad waters which roared and heaved around it.

It contained about as much ground as an ordinary city block, and the only vegetation upon it was the clump of palms beneath which he had taken that disastrous siesta.

The only exception was a small patch of wiry grass and stunted vines growing in the center of the nearly circular islet.

There was nothing to sustain life; no fruits, no springs of fresh water.

But life is sweet. And the old sailor was not the man to submit to any ill fortune without an energetic struggle.

After brooding despondently for awhile over his wretched mishap, he started to examine the reef.

He found that in several places fresh water from recent rains had collected plentifully in various hollows of the rocks.

Not long afterwards he found that there was a strip on the beach to which turtles resorted daily to lay their eggs.

And still later he discovered that the patch of marshy grass in the center of the reef was frequented by a kind of wild, aquatic fowl.

Bandy regained his courage and hopeful spirit.

"The old craft hain't going tew lay up in etarnity's dock jest yet. I reckon me and yeou'll hev a few more cruises arter we git out of this leetle port of hard luck," he said, cheerfully, to the faithful Demon.

Off to the north-west he could distinguish the rocky peaks of a much larger island.

The old sailor would sit for hours together gazing across at those glistening summits.

"That 'ar's Falcon Key. I kin remember running into a putty cove once thar, when I was skipper of a gallus Florida craft nigh on twenty year ago.

"I'd like tew git over thar agin ef sech a cruise could be contrivable in this 'ere powerful unconvenient siteration.

"I've aller kinder thought, from pints I knowed and heerd, that Watty Crombie's bark aire laying somewhat around Falcon Key."

In his eagerness to cross the space intervening between his small barren rock and Falcon Key, the old sailor constructed a raft—or at least something which he meant for one.

For, of course, he had neither the proper implements nor the suitable materials for such an undertaking.

He collected whatever fragments of planks and timbers he could pick up around the shore.

These he lashed firmly together with an exceedingly tough vine which grew rankly in the patch of marsh.

Then he managed to uproot a number of palmetto saplings, digging with a long piece of flat iron which he found washed up on the rocks.

To farther enlarge and strengthen the raft he bound the trunks, roots and branches uncut along the edges.

And to increase its buoyancy he fastened an empty cask at each end.

It was more than six weeks before Bandy Jarl was enabled to complete his primitive contrivance.

But it was finished at last, and he was ready for his voyage across to Falcon Key.

He was on the point of starting, when suddenly he espied a sail on the distant eastern horizon.

It rapidly became larger and closer.

As the vessel approached, Jarl distinguished the graceful white and gold schooner, belonging to the free rover chieftain, Pietro Parza.

She presently cast anchor less than a mile away, in the space between the reef and Falcon Key.

At this Jarl was much surprised, for it was very seldom any vessel ventured within those treacherous waters, so thickly studded with sunken rocks.

He was yet more surprised when a small boat was put off and rowed swiftly in the direction of Falcon Key.

"That 'ar red vulter bird smells yaller gold. He wouldn't swoop down 'ere in a pond full of snags with that 'ar gallus ship of hisen if he hadn't diskivered some prey of valer," the old sailor decided shrewdly.

It was nearly dark when the boat returned to the schooner.

The Onward Bound at once hoisted her anchor, and with all sails set, scudded away south-easterly.

She passed the reef so closely that Jarl held his breath, expecting to hear her keel grinding on the rocks.

Dark as it was, he could recognize the tall, sinewy figure of Parza from among the men on deck.

She had barely passed when Jarl saw a light form climb suddenly over the rail abaft, and drop downward into the sea.

There was no splash, or if there was, it was too trifling to be heard above the noises on board.

The schooner sailed on, skimming the waves like a swallow as she ran before a spanking breeze.

Bandy Jarl dashed down to the water's edge.

He could see the slight figure struggling with the big, foam-topped rollers.

His dog was at his heels.

"Do yeou see that thar, Demon? In with yeou, my purty lad, and bring the critter out."

The great brute plunged bravely into the waves.

In three minutes he came staggering up the shelving rock, half dragging and half carrying an almost senseless girl.

The old sailor bent down and relieved the tired animal of his burden.

As he lifted the girl in his arms, he saw that she was scarcely more than a child, and exceedingly beautiful.

"Twould be a powerful pity fer sech er trim leetle craft tew go by the board. I aire all-fired proud of yeou, Demon, fer luging ther purty critter tew anchor," said Jarl.

With the words he stroked the big intelligent beast as affectionately as he might have caressed a human being.

He carried the girl up to the shelter of the stunted palmetto trees, and placed her gently upon the dry grass.

She was apparently suffering more from some severe fright than from her buffeting with the great rollers.

She was conscious enough to understand that she had been rescued and was safe for the present.

In a few minutes she was so far recovered that she could clearly recall everything preceding her plunge into the sea.

She sat upright and looked pitifully at the old sailor.

"When I jumped overboard I thought I should be drowned. But I didn't care if I did die, so I could get away from those horrible men," she said.

The old man questioned her with almost fatherly kindness of manner and she freely related the short but eventful history of her life.

Her name was Fanny Revere.

Her parents had both died in her infancy, and since that she had lived in a retired suburb of New York, in charge of a lonely old woman who was deaf and nearly blind, and whose means were very limited.

She had attended a public school, had always been clothed comfortably, and had been allowed many amusements necessary to her youth.

Her "Aunty," as she called the old lady, had always been kind to her.

Altogether, she had not been unhappy until within the last year.

Then Darcy Freel, the son of the individual who settled her dead father's affairs, had sought her as his wife.

She had neither liking nor respect for the young man, and she had repulsed him with scorn.

All the same, he persisted in his suit, bringing her costly presents and seeking her everywhere, until she was nearly distracted by his importunities.

Her aunty's little cottage was near the river bank, and she was fond of rowing about in a small skiff which the elder Freel had given her.

She was on the water late one afternoon, when a large row-boat, manned by three or four oarsmen, deliberately collided with her skiff in spite of her exertions to avoid it.

The skiff was capsized. And although she could have easily reached the bank by swimming, she was seized by one of the men and dragged into the row-boat.

One of the men was Parza.

He immediately conveyed her aboard his schooner which was anchored a little distance down stream.

At dark he sailed out of the bay on his voyage south.

During the whole trip down he had treated her with the utmost kindness and consideration. But he had also avowed his determination of becoming her husband at the first West Indian port where he should stop.

It was to save herself from such a fate that she watched her opportunity and threw herself into the sea.

She believed she must perish. But the terror of being forced into a marriage with the free rover chieftain outweighed her fear of death.

Her first feeling at realizing her rescue was of astonishment more than gratitude.

"He will come back and look for me. He will find me and take me away from you," she said to Jarl.

"Wall, I kinder reckon I'll never leetle to say agin it, s'posing he does steer back arter yeou," said Bandy.

He made the poor girl as comfortable as he could with the scanty means at his disposal.

He gave her the shelter he had constructed for himself.

It was under a jutting ledge of rock, made snug by projecting sides of driftwood, which were fastened in position by long strands of tough and flexible vine.

The bed was a pile of clean grasses and dried seaweed.

While Fannie slept he and Demon kept guard under the cluster of dwarfed palmettos.

With the first gleam of daylight the next morning, he put his protege on his queer little raft and paddled for Falcon Key.

The surface of the strait was smooth almost as a mill pond when they started, scarcely a breath of wind rippling the dark blue water.

They had traversed more than half the distance when a breeze began to blow fresh and strong from the south-west.

Presently he descried a sail bearing down from windward.

Jarl knew at once it was the Onward Bound.

He knew that no vessel would venture into those dangerous portions of the strait without being impelled by some potent motive such as actuated the rover chief.

Bandy Jarl watched her with an anxiety he dare not express.

She was running before the breeze like a racer.

When within a mile of the key she suddenly swung around, furling her sails, and then dropped her anchor.

She let down her jolly boat, into which seven or eight men descended.

The jolly boat then headed for Falcon Key.

The old sailor looked at his protege with despairing eyes.

The girl fully understood their desperate plight.

It was almost impossible that they should escape the boat.

There was but a single chance for them.

If they could gain the key without being overhauled by the pirate boat, they might elude the enemy by concealing themselves among the rocks and caves.

There was hardly a possibility that their presence on the water had not already been detected by the sharp-eyed marauders of the sea.

Bandy Jarl operated his rude sculls with all the strength of his still vigorous arms, directing his raft toward the little harbor within the fringe of luxuriant trees.

But his heroic exertions were useless.

Suddenly a fierce shout was wafted to his ears.

He turned to see the swarthy, evil-browed pirates rowing like mad to overhaul the raft.

They had been so intent upon their original errand that they had only just discovered it.

Now with a few more strokes of their threshing oars they would be alongside.

Fannie Revere started up with a piercing cry of anguish.

"I am lost—lost!" she shrieked.

CHAPTER VII.

HARRY'S MARVELOUS TREASURE-TROVE.

At the sight of the pirate band hastening to the wreck, the young castaway felt an icy shiver creeping through the very marrow of his bones.

His fear was not so much physical and personal as it was for the safety of the precious records in his possession.

At the thought of the volume being wrested from him possibly, he set his teeth with fierce determination and involuntarily tightened his hold upon the spear he carried.

"It will cost anybody dear who attempts to take this book from me," he muttered.

Again he darted an anxious look about him, searching for some way of escape.

If he could only reach the rocks and bushes on the beach above the wreck, he could go whatever way he liked without risk of discovery.

But to do this he must cross an open strip of sand several rods in width, and almost directly within the buccaneers' range of vision.

But detection was imminent where he stood.

The evil band had approached to within a few feet of his covert.

"I'm going to try it," he said to himself, desperately.

Stooping almost on all fours he dodged along the opposite side of the hulk.

Once he came in contact with the loose end of a warped plank, dislodging a quantity of sand and gravel which fell in a rattling shower.

"What's that? Didn't you hear something?" said one of the keen-eared seamen.

They all halted for a moment to listen.

Harry felt his knees shaking under him as he crouched close against the hulk, scarcely daring to breathe.

But the Portuguese evidently thought themselves mistaken.

Throwing down their spades, they began to descend into the cabin which Harry had but just vacated.

The boy drew a long breath of relief as the band disappeared down the rotting cabin stairs.

Now was his opportunity.

With an alert backward glance he stepped from the shelter of the prow which just here was upreared above the sand, and which would therefore partly conceal him in crossing to the higher portion of the beach.

Bending low, he scuttled across the open space like a rabbit.

He reached the protection of the rocks and bushes just as one of the band again appeared at the top of the cabin stairs.

Harry made his way along the inner slope of the ridge until he arrived at a spot where he could watch the movements of the buccaneers without being observed by them.

And there he threw himself down to await their departure from the key.

They remained around the wreck for several hours.

They spent the time in alternately searching the cabin, and in examining the moldered cargo which consisted of hides and coffee and mahogany.

At intervals they stopped for an excited consultation together.

Through some momentary heedlessness Harry failed to notice that one of the gang had left the others and gone on a tour of the island.

He was sitting in supposed security with the volume of records open on his knees, when he was surprised by the sound of a man's heavy tread close behind him.

In a trice he was on his feet with his spear poised for a defensive thrust.

He pushed his precious volume into the bushes behind him as he sprang from the ground.

Quick as his movement was, the man saw it, and evidently guessed its meaning.

He was a stocky, beetle-browed individual, with an expression of mingled greed and cunning upon his swarthy features.

He shot a furtive glance at the half-concealed volume, and grinned knowingly.

He manifested considerable surprise too at seeing only a boy.

"So it's a kid as is boss of his hacienda, eh? Are you all alone on this reef, young fellow?" he said.

Like his chief, Parza, he spoke excellent English.

Harry made no answer.

With a second grin, full of evil meaning, the Portuguese continued:

"What is the big book you poked into the weeds behind you, young King Crusoe?

"You found it in the wreck down there, didn't you?

"Pretty important, isn't it?

"You wanted to hide it, eh?"

The young castaway eyed the intruder quietly, but he still kept silence.

The Portuguese advanced a step or two.

"I think I'll take that book. Just hand it over, young fellar."

"You can't have it, sir."

Harry spoke with cool determination.

The pirate stared at the boy's unexpected composure and resolution.

It was nearly a minute before he recovered from his astonishment.

"If you won't hand it over, I shall be obliged to help myself, King Crusoe."

The words were spoken menacingly and with an ugly sneer.

He started forward to execute the threat.

"Stop where you are, sir."

The boy's supple figure was erected to more than his natural height.

His eyes flashed lightning.

His spear was uplifted in his right hand ready for action.

He looked dangerous and the buccaneer recognized the fact.

The latter stopped short.

"Aren't you a little rash, King Crusoe?

"I have only to call, and you will have the Cormorants buzzing round your ears.

"You will fare better to treat with me.

"Give me the book and I'll persuade the chief to leave the island, and they need never know you are here."

The man's air was conciliatory and almost wheedling.

He was only wasting time and breath.

"No one can have that book without first walking over my dead body," was the boy's reply.

"Then I'll take that little walk, young fellow," the pirate said, with an oath.

With a sudden, quick movement he jerked forth his dirk, or rapier—as it was long and narrow and double-edged.

Whirling it about his head, and muttering a fiendish execration, he plunged furiously toward the boy.

The movement was so sudden that Harry, nimble and watchful as he was, had no time to hurl his own weapon.

A moment later he was glad that this was so.

The ruffian, frantic with greed and rage, was blind to the danger of the ground beneath his feet.

As he dashed forward one foot sunk into a narrow fissure of the uneven coral rock.

He shot forward with terrific force, striking sidewise against the trunk of a palmetto.

There was a second of frenzied struggling, and then he fell, face downward, on the rock.

His writhings were so terrible that Harry stepped over to where he lay.

Young King Crusoe then saw that his foe was dying.

The pirate had fallen on his rapier, and the long, narrow blade had penetrated his vitals.

A strange feeling of awe filled Harry's pulses at sight of the outlaw's death struggles.

Twice during his bondage on that lonely reef had he been saved from death as if by a miracle, and almost exactly in the same way—once from the wild hog, and now from the buccaneer.

As he gazed soberly at his fallen enemy he was startled by sudden shouts from the wreck.

He was yet more startled to behold several of the pirates hastening up to where he stood.

Their comrade had fallen in a gap between the rocks and bushes, where he was quite plainly in view from the hulk.

One of them happened to be looking in that direction at the moment he fell headlong across the opening.

This man had called the attention of the others to the incident, and they had started to ascertain what the trouble might be.

Luckily for Harry, he had not approached near enough to the prostrate body for the gang to get a sight of him.

But he knew that he must speedily seek a different locality if he wanted to keep out of their clutches.

Seizing his precious records, he bounded behind the masses of rock which topped the ridge, until he reached a small elevation covered with trees and shrubs.

Piles of rocks walled the coast side, and protected by these he could keep a vigilant watch of the buccaneers, while they could not discern him even with a glass.

And besides, it was in a part of the reef where a number of caves afforded a secure retreat from possible pursuers.

But young King Crusoe was not pursued.

The Red Cormorant gang probably did not even suspect his presence on the key.

And with the death of their comrade they were not likely to learn of his being there, unless they should explore the island and he should thus encounter them by some mischance.

Their mate's violent death did not appear to arouse any suspicions among them.

It was plainly evident that he had caught his foot fast in the crevice of the rock and so fallen upon his rapier.

No additional cause for his demise occurred to them, probably.

After a little conference they carried the body down the outer slope for a short distance, to a level space of ground where the soil was less stony.

There, under a solitary palm tree, they made his grave and laid him to his final repose.

They did not continue their search for the treasure of the wrecked Brazilius.

They no doubt thought it would be useless to do so without any information as to where the chest was hidden.

Immediately after the burial of the dead sailor they hurried to their boat and rowed back to the Onward Bound.

Harry was rejoiced at their departure.

He waved them a mock salute, and tossed his cap in the air with a gleeful buzzza.

He watched the graceful white and gold schooner until her sail was a mere speck on the distant blue water.

But it was too late in the day to begin excavating for the treasure chest.

He deferred the interesting task until the next morning.

With the first peep of light he bounded from his bed of pine needles and dried grasses.

He breakfasted on a wild duck he had killed the previous morning.

And he roasted it over a fire he had kindled by striking a flint-like stone against a piece of iron until the spark ignited a quantity of woody substance as dry as powder.

Owing to the difficulty of "striking fire" in this primitive fashion, the young castaway rarely allowed his embers to become entirely extinguished.

He had constructed a fire-place in a convenient niche between a couple of rocks; and by covering his live coals with ashes when the fire was not required, he kept it smoldering from day to day.

He had forgotten this precaution in all the excitement of the preceding afternoon.

After his simple breakfast of roast duck and bananas, he consulted his chart.

This he afterwards put in his pocket for future reference.

Then, fearing that he might sometime be surprised and overpowered, he concluded to conceal the volume of records in some spot where it would be absolutely safe, and to which he could convey the contents of the chest if he should wish to do so.

The place he selected was not very close to his hut, nor was it among rocks, as a searcher would naturally suppose.

It was in level ground, midway between two isolated palm trees, and a certain number of paces from a cluster of shrubs on the bank of the little stream, which flowed lazily down the inner depression of the key, to finally empty into the natural harbor already mentioned.

It was there he dug his cache.

When this was done, or at least sufficiently under way for immediate purposes, young King Crusoe started to unearth his treasure-trove.

He easily distinguished the particular spot marked on the chart.

It was about fifty feet back from the western shore of the harbor, on a slight rise of ground, and at the roots of a tall tree, which towered high above the surrounding wood.

Harry had no spade nor pick with which to dig.

But in lieu of those implements he had his ax to break up the soil.

This being of a gravelly wood-mold, was easily removed afterward by a wooden shovel, which young King Crusoe had made himself from a board he had found among the drift along the beach.

It was slow work without proper tools.

But at the end of an hour's steady and diligent labor his ax-blade

struck against some hard substance which emitted a sharp, metallic ring.

He flung down the ax with some excitement.

With his awkward flat shovel he scooped away the loose earth until he had bared one corner of what appeared to be a copper box, the edges fastened together by rivets with broad heads.

"Eureka! It is here, as sure as preaching!" he exclaimed aloud.

It was the treasure chest indeed.

But he worked without intermission for nearly two hours longer before he had wholly uncovered it and had pulled it upon the grass out of the excavation.

It was a copper-covered cedar chest, about three feet in length, by about half that in width and two in depth.

It was secured by the common, old-fashioned trunk lock.

The copper was green from the dampness underground and badly corroded in patches.

Even the durable cedar was decayed and crumbled in spots from the corrosive action of the briny water, probably, which had percolated through the gravel at high tides, or perhaps from the verdigris of the copper.

Harry had no key; but he needed none.

In dragging the heavy chest from the cavity between the roots of the trees, the lid pulled partly loose from the rusted hinge at one end.

A couple of blows from the ax severed entirely the covered nails holding the hinges in place.

The lock was pried apart with only a slight effort.

And then young King Crusoe lifted the cover from the chest, and gazed with eager eyes upon his treasure-trove.

There was a shallow tray on the top.

This was filled with various small valuables and curiosities, which the unfortunate captain of the doomed Brazilios had collected in many lands.

There were curious coins in gold and silver; a quantity of the lustrous green beetles used in jewelry; strings of pearls of every color; pink, white, and blood-red coral in beads and in carved ornaments; grotesque little idols in ivory and bronze; an Eastern scimitar, the handle of which was a solid mass of gems; and a solid gold vase, four inches high, shaped like a goblet, and full to the brim with uncut precious stones of every sort and description.

The tray held a fortune in these small-sized valuables. Over all were several pieces of rich Oriental silks and cashmeres.

But these latter were of course spoiled by the damp of so many years.

When Harry removed the tray, he fairly held his breath with wonder at sight of the contents beneath.

"It is like a fable from the Arabian Nights. It is too marvelous to be true," he muttered.

"No wonder such a man as the Red Cormorant is ready to risk his beautiful schooner in these treacherous waters!"

The chest was packed with gold coins, mostly Spanish and French pieces.

On top of the coins were precious stones set in various kinds of ornaments, necklaces and bracelets, pins and lockets. There were diamonds and emeralds, rubies and sapphires, topazes and amethysts, and many more different in kind and hue.

Over all, as in the tray, were spread priceless silken fabrics, which were in a state of complete moldering ruin.

In the till across one end of the chest at the top were more precious stones cut and polished, but unset.

These loose stones consisted of cat's eyes and carbuncles, opals and aqua marines, with a quantity of cameos and crystals, mosaics and gold stone.

In the till were also various ornamental articles in lapis-lazuli and jasper, with a few rare turquoise.

In fact, young King Crusoe's treasure-trove embraced specimens of everything rare and precious, found in every quarter of the globe and every corner of the ocean's depths.

For many minutes the young castaway stood as if in a dream, staring with dazed eyes at the countless riches before him.

It seemed incredible that all that wonderful, glittering store of coin and jewels could be absolutely his own.

He had been too excited and absorbed to glance seaward, or, indeed, to heed anything around him.

Suddenly he was aroused from his trance of wonder by a girl's piercing shriek from the harbor below him.

His face turned white and his pulses almost ceased beating as he tore his gaze away from his newly discovered treasure-trove and turned his eyes toward the water.

What he first saw was the pirate schooner lying at anchor a mile or so off shore.

"They have come back to search for the chest! I shall lose it all," he murmured.

It was a thought to dismay a stouter heart than his.

He was barely conscious of it, however, when his glance was flashed from the buccaneer craft back to a stirring spectacle nearer the beach.

It was that of Bandy, Jarl's poor little raft closely pursued by the racing pirate boat.

Neither was more than three hundred feet from the spot where young King Crusoe stood.

CHAPTER VIII.

DANDY FREEL ON DECK.

In the reception room of one of New York City's swell club houses, a young man of twenty-six or seven sat smoking.

He was dressed in the highest extreme of fashion, and his display of diamonds was dazzling.

But his conspicuous attire only rendered the plainness of his person more apparent.

His frame was large-boned and lank; his shoulders were narrow and stooping.

He had a retreating forehead and a receding chin, and the nose between was like a parrot's beak. His mouth was wide and the lips flabby; his hair was the color of tow, while he had little greenish, red-rimmed eyes with a peculiarly unpleasant and stealthy expression.

Such was Darcy, or "Dandy" Freel, the moving spirit in some of the villainies just chronicled.

The elder Freel was reputed to be a millionaire several times over.

He had begun life as a common laborer on the docks. How he had made his money was a problem few people could solve. But if it had been made by dishonest transactions, there had been no one thus far to demand his punishment.

His son, "Dandy," posed as a social light.

But it was his wealth, or reputed wealth, which secured the regard shown him in certain circles and for which he was simply tolerated in others.

As he sat there smoking lazily, the door opened to admit a tall, dark, handsome young man, who was dressed with unostentatious richness and elegance, and who possessed an indisputable manner and look of distinction.

He advanced with well bred ease, apparently looking for some person.

He noticed Dandy Freel with a contemptuous gleam of his flashing black eyes.

But that was the only sign of recognition.

At the slight noise of the door opening and closing, Freel glanced around with his characteristic air of haughty indifference.

At sight of the new-comer his features turned a chalky yellow.

His little red-rimmed eyes glared with rage, not unmixed with alarm.

It was with a visible effort that he partly recovered his usual pose of languid unconcern.

"Aw! Is it you, really? I thought you were asked not to intrude yourself in these rooms again?" he drawled.

There was unspeakable insolence in the way the words were uttered.

Pietro Parza—for the visitor was the chieftain of the Red Cormorants—stopped quietly and looked his interlocutor straight in the face.

"You thought nothing of the kind," he said, in a voice which was as composed and dignified as was his manner.

"Do you dare insinuate that I—aw—that I would speak falsely?" Freel sputtered.

He was rapidly becoming too disconcerted to retain his affected drawl.

"I dare tell you to your teeth that you lie," said Parza.

"Did you come here to pick a quarrel with somebody?"

"I come here for revenge."

At this juncture several young clubmen, who had been conversing at the opposite end of the room, arose from their seats and approached the disputants.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, we can't have any disturbance in these rooms. If you have any difficulty to settle, you must settle it elsewhere," one of them said in a tone of remonstrance and authority.

Parza bowed with inimitable grace and courtesy.

His smile, which disclosed his white, handsome teeth beneath his black, up-curled mustache, was as serene as a sky of June.

"I regret what has passed, sirs, as much as you. I entered the club-rooms, hoping to see my friend Bellows, when this—this person—insulted me without provocation," he said, in apology.

Parza's distinguished look, his fascinating manners and his graceful apology altogether infuriated Dandy Freel beyond all control.

He envied the handsome, audacious buccaneer who defied him with such cool and polished finesse.

"We don't want the fellow here," he snarled, rudely. "He's nothing but a nigger pirate—a regular cut-throat Captain Kidd—the skipper of a vessel which flies the black flag with the skull and crossbones."

The three or four members of the club who were present appeared amazed at such an insolent outbreak from young Freel.

He had forfeited their consideration in the matter, whatever it was.

But at the second insult Parza only smiled. And it was a smile which maddened his adversary.

He quietly produced a card, which he extended to the young clubman with his courteous bow.

The card was elegantly inscribed with the title and name of "Count Pietro Parza."

"I owe you an explanation of this regrettable affair, gentlemen," he said, with winning suavity. "But it's a long story—I should presume upon your kindness to a stranger! I should greatly test your credibility."

Dandy Freel interfered with an expression of actual terror.

"I forbid it. He shan't explain. He wants a chance to belie me. Can't you see through his accursed cunning?" the social light almost yelled.

But his insolence had displeased his companions of the club, while his obvious alarm had aroused their suspicions and curiosity.

"Be silent, Freel! Your lack of civility has forfeited your right to a voice in the matter. We prefer an explanation from the count, and we pledge ourselves to listen to all he wishes to say," one of them remarked.

Freel tried to mask his confusion under a sneer.

Parza acknowledged his thanks to the young clubmen by one of his most expressive bows.

Then he began:

"This little *contretemps*, gentlemen, originated more than a year ago in certain events which I need not relate in detail. It is enough for me to say that Darcy Freel succeeded in parting me from the woman I loved."

"He represented me as a monster, without honor and without conscience."

"She believed his skillful falsehoods. But it broke her heart. In three months my loved one who was to have been my wife was buried away from my sight forever."

The buccaneer's voice trembled. He turned his head that he might hide the emotion of his changing face.

"While I was brooding over her death," he presently continued, "it occurred to me one day that a man so adroit in calumny could be no novice in evil doing."

"And partly to occupy my mind and so crowd out my grief even momentarily, I resolved to inform myself concerning this defamer's career."

At this juncture Dandy Freel growled incoherently and started for the door.

"Stay where you are, Freel," one of the young men ordered him sternly.

"Perhaps I had better not proceed, gentlemen?" Parza suggested.

He was having a glorious revenge; but not a line of his face, not an inflection of his voice, betrayed the fact.

"Go on, count. We command you to do so," one of his listeners answered him.

Parza appeared reluctant. But after a pause he resumed.

"Well, then," said he, "I was not long in obtaining incontestable proof of the fact that Darcy Freel is living on two fortunes at least, of which he has defrauded the rightful owners."

Parza was interrupted by exclamations of indignant surprise.

Dandy again skulked toward the door.

But he was forced back and held bodily in his chair.

"One of these parties is a youth named Harry Crombie. He was by some means got aboard a West Indian fruit boat, to be afterwards bound hand and foot and thrown into the sea by Freel's hired assassin.

"The other party is a young girl named Fanny Revere. She fled to escape his brutal persecutions.

"Both these young people are now in my protection.

"And now, gentlemen, you understand why Darcy Freel sought to drive me from these rooms by insults. He feared me."

The free rover chieftain ceased.

His revenge was as complete as he could wish.

Dandy Freel sat cowering under the scathing glances leveled at him.

"You won't let me defend myself. You'd rather be duped by a scalawag you blackballed yourself a year ago," the shrinking wretch complained.

"The blackballing was done by a few of the boys who believed your colossal falsehood at the moment, Freel.

"And we are grateful for this opportunity to assure the count of our regard and to express our regret for the hasty action of a few of us on that occasion.

"We have no farther use for you in this club, Freel.

"We transfer to the count the highly satisfactory privilege of assisting you from the rooms to the street."

These remarks were made by the young club member who had been spokesman from the first, and who was evidently an influential personage in the association.

The exposed villain struggled like a maniac to escape from the strong arms holding him.

"Let loose of me! This is an outrage—a conspiracy! I'll go without assistance," he whined, abjectedly.

No one answered him.

Every face there was grim as death and hard as granite.

Count Pietro Parza might really be a pirate for aught they knew to the contrary.

But that was not the subject of the present discussion.

They were indignant at having been deceived by a person so petty and unscrupulous and so thoroughly contemptible as Darcy Freel.

His offenses against honor and good breeding were beyond any excuse or pardon.

He was a reproach to the club, and they must rid themselves of him as speedily as possible.

Parza advanced to the chair where Freel crouched, shivering and cringing.

The two who had held him in his seat stepped back, and the elegant count placed a hand upon his collar.

The touch was very quiet and dignified.

But it was a grip of steel.

There was a roaring in his ears and a million specks of light dancing before his eyes as he was whisked across the room to the outer door.

It was done in a flash. And then the tips of Parza's stylish pat-

ent leather boots assisted the humbled offender down the stairs to the sidewalk.

By the time Freel had staggered to his feet after his ignominious expulsion from the club-rooms, his tormentors had all disappeared.

He hastened around the nearest corner with as much celerity as his various and sundry bruises would permit.

"I'll pay them for this! Oh, I'll have satisfaction yet! I have plenty of money, and with that a fellow can do anything," he muttered.

He ground his teeth, while his livid features were distorted with the fury of a demon.

And then he suddenly recalled the buccaneer's assertions concerning the defrauded young heir and heiress.

Harry Crombie was not drowned.

Fanny Revere still lived.

And both were in the care of the Red Cormorant.

"Perdition and a thousand furies! Parza may bring them here any day to claim the money.

"What in thunder can I do? That mocking, smiling Portuguese freebooter can strip me of every dollar.

"I'd like to get my fingers round his throat. I'd like to choke some of the grinning triumph out of his accursed black phiz!"

Freel had gone only a couple of blocks, when suddenly he was stopped by somebody who clapped a hand familiarly on his shoulder.

"Hello, boss! I was just steering fer the place yer hangs out."

"I sez to myself, while I wasn't doing nuthin' else, I'd jest cruise eround this 'ere way so me and yer could settle up that 'ar leetle business of our'n."

It was Skipper Amos Slycraft who accosted him.

Freel shook off the other's hand wrathfully.

"What business are you talking about?"

"Yer needn't go to pertending yer sergit, boss. Didn't yer promerse me a couple of hundred fer chucking that 'ar pesky young rat inter the mill-pond?"

"The infernal youngster isn't drowned, Slycraft. I've just seen Parza, and he says the boy is alive and in his care."

"Mighty Jonar! Yer don't say so! But if 'tis so, 'tain't none of my fault. I sorrered yer order prezact."

"Do you know of any place where Parza would be likely to keep that boy secluded, Slycraft?"

"I dunno, boss. Humsoever, it might be some island where no crafts don't pass too frequent."

"When do you sail, Slycraft?"

"I kin tell yer better when I find out, boss. I hain't unloaded ther ship yit."

"Well, don't take enough cargo out to hinder fast sailing. I'm going with you."

"Yer be?"

"I'm going on the trail of that sneaky black pirate. I'm going to get that boy back. If I should use my own yacht, Parza would guess my purpose at once and thwart me at every turn."

"I see what yer tacking fer, boss."

"Well, we shall need a couple of small cannon, with guns and ammunition, and a crew we can trust. Do you think you can manage it with plenty of money?"

"I kin stock ther ship and make a walking arsenal of every derned Jack Tar ef I hev money enough, boss."

"Won't anybody interfere with you?"

"I ruther reckon not, boss, seeing I know ther ropes. But yer don't calkerlate on fightin, do yer?"

"I calculate I'm going to get even with that meddling black outlaw. I'm going to tow him into some port a prisoner before I'm done with him."

"Great tornaders! Yer hev got yer dander up, hain't yer, boss?"

"I've got a little bone to pick with pirate Parza, that's all. You can't blame a man when he gets wrathy if he has good cause, Slycraft. If somebody tries to injure me and take away my property, I intend to turn on him of course."

"Sartain. That's the pint every time, boss."

After a little more righteous moralizing the two worthies separated for the night.

CHAPTER IX.

HARRY PLAYS A BIG CARD.

At sight of that fragile little raft battling heroically against overwhelming odds, all young King Crusoe's chivalrous sympathy was instantly aroused.

And besides, he knew that his own life was in danger, and that his newly discovered treasure-trove was likely to be wrested from him.

It was an exigency when any man or boy with a particle of spirit and courage will fight and fight to the death.

Harry had brought down from his cabin his bow and arrows and two or three of his best spears.

Snatching his simple weapons all up in a bunch together, he bounded down the declivity to the beach.

His presence there was so unexpected and his looks so singular, that the Portuguese for an instant turned their attention from the raft to him.

The clothing Harry wore when he was drifted upon the lonely reef had been worn to tatters in a few weeks.

His trousers now were made partly from plaited or braided grass and partly from the hide of the wild hog he had killed.

For a jacket he had carefully skinned the various wild fowl which he had shot with his bow and arrows.

These feathered skins, tanned and sewed neatly together, made a comfortable but grotesque garment.

His hat was of braided grass, and upon his feet he wore sandals of hog's skin.

At this singular apparition the Portuguese stared for a moment with interest, neglecting their oars.

The breeze had developed into a gale; the waters of the strait were leaping tumultuously in great seething billows.

With every wave the little raft lurched from side to side, or pitched nearly on end, threatening to hurl its occupants into the sea.

Bandy Jarl was working his sculls nobly.

But his efforts were unavailing.

At the moment young King Crusoe reached the strand, there was hardly more than a boat's length of space between the raft and its exultant pursuers.

The boy's pulses thrilled at the sight.

He poised one of his rude spears.

He had become so expert in throwing it that he knew with each cast he should kill his man like a log.

But he hesitated.

A natural horror of sending a soul into eternity restrained his hand. The Red Cormorants had no such scruples.

As Harry aimed his weapon and again paused, there was a chorus of fierce shouts and furious yells.

Instantly a dozen carbines, like those used by cavalry, were pointed at him.

A dozen big leaden bullets rattled around him in a hissing volley.

But the boy, as if he bore a charmed life, stood unharmed and undaunted in the midst of the deadly shower.

Simultaneously there was a second piercing shriek from the raft.

A great roller had heaved it aloft, holding it perpendicular for a breath of time, and had then swept it within a few inches of the water's edge.

Everything upon it, animate and inanimate, was hurled into the boiling surf.

Harry darted forward and leaped knee-deep into the foaming brine.

A few feet away Bandy Jarl was wading through water to his breast.

The intelligent dog had seized Fanny Revere by her clothing and was gallantly guiding her to the beach.

The pirates, with diabolical cries and curses, had urged their boat nearer.

Their carbines were leveled for a second fire.

Young King Crusoe no longer hesitated to use his own weapons.

Poising his rude wooden lance, he aimed at the leader of the free rover crew.

It was not Parza.

For some reason the Red Cormorant chief had remained aboard his schooner that morning.

And no doubt it was better for that devoted little company of unfortunates he had stayed on his vessel.

Harry's lance struck its target with wonderful accuracy.

The point transfixes the man's shoulder, breaking the bone and toppling him backward into the water.

A perfect pandemonium of oaths burst from the lips of his insurated comrades.

In their rage they fired at random.

The leaden rain pattered harmlessly over the waves, and none of the little company was hurt.

By this time Bandy Jarl had emerged from the water.

Demon and his fair charge had gained the shelter of a rock back from the beach.

Harry followed the old sailor.

The latter had saved a brace of revolvers and his belt of cartridges when the cunning Slycraft towed the yawl away from the reef.

He was now ready to join Harry in defense of their lives and liberty.

"Yeou'd better sail eout of this 'ere harbor, ye pesky robbers.

"Ef yeou don't, we'll send them onholy carcasses of yeour'n a-scudding inter ther land of nowhar."

Thus he called to the pirate gang.

A jeer answered him.

They had again leveled their carbines.

Before they could fire Harry hurled a second spear.

Another of the Portuguese reeled over the side of the boat into the water, helpless with a fractured thigh.

Young King Crusoe did not aim to kill.

He sought only to disable the enemy.

Bandy Jarl had stood with a seven-shooter in each hand.

As the second pirate fell, his weapons spoke.

Crack! crack! crack! sounded the flying balls until every chamber was empty.

Not a single Portuguese escaped unwounded.

A howl of pain and fury sounded from the pirate boat.

"Stop firing, you fiends! We give in. You got the advantage," one of them shouted.

"I reckon 'twon't do no damage tew keep these purty singing birds pintered at yeou," Bandy replied.

"Leastwise, 'twon't ef yeou don't try none of yeour serpent tricks tew git ther start of us."

The buccaneers assisted back into the boat their two mates who were struggling in the surf.

Then they headed their boat back to the schooner.

A little later the Onward Bound set sail, and was under way toward the south.

"Wall, I vum tew gracious! ef the pizen critters ain't really going off," old Bandy exclaimed in surprise.

"It may be only a ruse," said Harry. "They may think to throw us off our guard and then return, perhaps, at night."

The truth was that the Portuguese crew were more-or-less superstitious.

Young King Crusoe's dress and his wonderful prowess with such singular weapons had seemed supernatural to them.

If it was not so they could not have been overcome so easily, they declared.

They maintained that the island was haunted by some uncanny thing in the shape of a boy.

This supernatural apparition had wings like a petrel.

His eyes were like coals of fire.

And when they fired upon him with their carbines, their bullets passed through his body without injuring him or affecting him at all.

They positively refused to return to Falcon Key for any consideration.

Pietro Parza did not insist.

He believed that the little party was in his power anyway.

They could not get away from the reef in any case.

Meanwhile he had a project in view, connected with his vengeance upon Darcy Freel.

He would wait awhile. And when his men had partly recovered from their foolish fright he would swoop down on the key some night and capture this redoubtable boy with the others of the little company.

When the buccaneer schooner had vanished on the distant horizon, Harry conducted his guests to his little cabin.

Not even to Bandy Jarl was he willing to disclose his marvelous discovery of the treasure chest.

He made them as comfortable as possible.

And while they were sleeping the profound sleep of exhaustion, he went back to the harbor and conveyed his treasure-trove to the cache he had dug for it near the little stream.

The copper-covered chest he replaced in the cavity among the big twisted tree roots.

He shoveled the earth over it again with extreme care, removing all the loose soil which might show that the spot had been disturbed.

The precaution was designed to mislead any searchers who might possibly find the spot.

If they found an empty chest, they would be likely to conjecture almost anything except the truth.

In any case they would never suspect that the treasure still remained on the island.

At least, this was Harry's opinion on the subject.

Day after day passed by for the little party on Falcon Key.

The days rolled into weeks; and the weeks merged into months.

Still the chieftain of the free rovers did not again appear to molest the young castaway and his two friends.

The time passed with surprising rapidity.

This doubtless was because the little company was always so busily occupied.

There was much needful to be done with each recurring day.

Sea water must be evaporated for the salt indispensable to their food.

Garments must be constructed from the materials which the little island furnished.

Weapons must be made; and there must be a daily hunt for the fowl and small animals upon which they mostly subsisted.

They erected a building with a stockade around it, as a retreat in case they should be attacked.

In this structure they stored their supplies, that they should have plenty in case of siege.

This building was furnished with a concealed way of exit, one corner at the base opening into a natural cavern or tunnel through the rocks.

This passage ended in a small cave among the luxuriant bushes and thickly growing trees on the bank of the stream near its confluence with the harbor.

They were not unhappy.

Young King Crusoe indeed keenly enjoyed the wild, free, simple life, with its savor of excitement and adventure.

Their supreme undertaking of all was the construction of a boat, with which they hoped to return some time to civilization.

This they built in a hollow of the thick wood, on the shore of the little natural harbor.

They had plenty of material from the wreck of the Brazilius, not only from the bulk itself, but the cargo also.

Their only drawback was the lack of proper tools.

This was overcome in a great measure, however, by the wonderful ingenuity of young King Crusoe.

"Mighty Joonar! With sech er headwork as yeour'n, thar bain't no call fur machinery places, dern me ef thar be," old Bandy Jarl exclaimed once, admiringly.

One day, when Harry was rummaging through the wreck, in the portion which had once been the forecastle, or crew's quarters, he found a chest of tools.

It had been the property of the ship's carpenter, no doubt.

Quite a number of chisels and similar articles were in a fairly serviceable condition.

A few days later he found a crowbar and a hand saw, with a couple of hammer heads and a number of knives.

He had previously found a hammer-head, but it had proved nearly useless from the corrosion of rust.

As a substitute he had been using a stone mallet, which he made with infinite difficulty and almost superhuman patience.

After this later discovery their work on the boat progressed bravely.

While Harry and the jolly old tar were working, their fair girl friend was wont to sit somewhere near them, braiding the long, tough grasses into various articles, and singing as gayly as if she were home among her girl associates.

If she grieved over her strange life, she never allowed Harry nor old Jarl to be worried by the fact.

She was a lovely creature with a gentle, tender disposition, while she was also spirited and intelligent.

Young King Crusoe simply worshipped her, and both he and Bandy Jarl treated her as reverently as if she were a young queen.

Either would have sacrificed his life to save her from the clutches of the evil-eyed pirate chieftain, or from any similar misfortune.

It was for her sake mostly they were so anxious to finish their boat as speedily as possible.

It was finally completed.

But it was a fortnight later before they finally succeeded in safely launching her.

There were insurmountable obstacles between the hollow in the wood and the water of the harbor.

And at last they laid the ways from the cradle to the bank of the stream fifty feet distant.

The water proved deep enough to float her to the mooring place they had selected.

This was a deep cove a dozen rods or so in diameter, just at the point where the little stream poured its waters into the harbor.

The cove, or inlet, was surrounded by an almost impenetrable hedge of trees and shrubs, interwoven by luxuriant southern vines.

Where it fronted the harbor, the great trees on either side interlocked, their branches hung with tangled festoons of moss, thus forming a curtain which effectually concealed the waters within.

Young King Crusoe had arranged an admirable route for flight in case they should be besieged by the Red Cormorants at any time.

From their little fortress in the stockade they could pass through the tunnel to the bank of the stream.

And from there it was only a hundred feet or so to the inlet, along a path hidden within dense and overarching shrubbery.

And it was well for them all that Harry had been so wise in forethought.

A few days after they had moored their boat safely in the cove Harry, from his sentinel peak, espied an approaching sail.

He knew at once it was the pirate schooner.

And so it proved.

A little later she cast anchor within a mile off the south-western end of the key.

She lay there until dark without showing any sign that the buccaneers intended to land.

"The pizen vultures ain't going tew swoop down upon this 'ere coop of our'n ontill arter nighttime."

"They calkerlake on surprising us, and jest yanking us out of this 'ere roost all tergether at one haul."

"The cunning cusses'll come slyng up erbout midnight, er a leetle afore, dern 'um."

Bandy Jarl's judgment was very correct in most matters.

And from various sources he had obtained considerable information regarding the pirate chieftain's peculiarities of action and methods of attack.

Old Jarl could foretell pretty closely what he would be apt to do in this instance.

Harry felt intuitively that he could rely upon the old sailor's opinions.

"So you think he won't bother us before midnight, Mr. Jarl?"

"I'm sartain of it, young fellar. 'Twouldn't be his way of doing, from all I've heerd of ther pesky vultur. He's tew smart and cute fer risking more'n he kin help, dern him!"

"How many are there aboard the schooner altogether, Mr. Jarl?"

"Thar hain't no more'n fifteen with the derned boss vultur and all."

"How many do you think Parza will be likely to bring over here with him?"

"Yeou kin bet he'll fetch jest as many as'll come. Arter these 'ere sharp teeth of our'n being showed oncat, they hain't going tew tackle us agin without enough men."

"Do you think he'll be apt to leave more than two or three on the schooner, Mr. Jarl?"

"I reckon ther derned vulture bird won't leave that 'ar many. But what in ther twelve tornaders be yeou driving at, young fellar?"

Harry laughed rather consciously.

"Oh, nothing. I've got a little plan, that's all," he answered.

"Yeou be a mighty long-headed chap, young King Crusoe. That 'ar headpiece of your'n aire wuth er powerful lot more'n most folks'. I'd jest like tew hear that 'ar leetle plan of your'n ef 'tain't tew much of er intarnal secret."

"I've been wondering if we couldn't take their schooner away from them and leave them here on the key—that's all, Mr. Jarl."

Bandy Jarl stared for a minute as if his brain could not quite grasp Harry's meaning.

Then he slapped his hand down upon his knee with an energy which made the whole cabin shake.

"Mighty berhemoth! Ef yeou hain't got gumption and ingenuity ernough tew steer er hull navy with the bumboats chucked in, then dern me!"

"Take ther vulture's craft and leave ther pesky pirate birds on ther key, hey? How modest and easy-like ther rogue says it!"

"It's only er leetle plan. Tain't nothing much, that's all. Mighty sea bosses! Ef yeou hain't er sharp youngster, with pluck ernough tew curmand er monitor, then sink my carkuss in er tin kittle!"

"Do you think we can do it, sir?"

"I think, young King Crusoe, yeou kin dew anything yeou hav'er mind tew take hold on."

"I foller whar yeou lead—that aire all I kin promerse."

"Thank you, sir. Then the first thing we do is to put the contents of the cache into the boat."

During the long time they had been so intimately associated, Harry had learned to trust the jolly old tar as unreservedly as he would have trusted his own father.

He had sometime before informed Jarl concerning his discovery of the treasure-trove, and how he had disposed of it for better security.

They had constructed a secret compartment between the lining and the outer planking of the boat, for its concealment in an exigency like the present.

Harry continued:

"We need not provision our boat; there is plenty of all that on the schooner."

"After putting the valuable stuff in its place, you will take Fannie down to the cove, where you will await me."

"Meanwhile, I shall stay here in the cabin with a bright light in the window to guide my visitors along the weary way."

"When I see them coming I'll count their noses, so I shall know how many we shall be obliged to pay our respects to on the schooner."

"Afterwards I shall interest myself a moment in their conversation. There's nothing like being posted, you know, when the game is rather steep."

"Then I'll scoot for you and Fannie, and we'll push off and make for that gallus white and gold craft like a house afire."

"With your revolvers, Mr. Jarl, and with my lances, we ought to be able to master three of those stumpy, sawed-off Portuguese."

Such was young King Crusoe's little plan.

He recounted it as carelessly as if he contemplated nothing more hazardous than snaring a brace of fowl for their supper.

"Great torpedoes and spouting whales! Ef yeou ain't a cool leetle cuss, then I'll swaller an alligator, dern me if I won't!" exclaimed Mr. Jarl.

Fannie looked at the clever, courageous boy rather wistfully.

Her dark eyes were sparkling with enthusiasm. But there was sadness on her pretty face, too.

She was proud of Harry's shrewd wit and heroism; but she feared greatly for his safety.

The little party had few minutes to spare.

Harry and Mr. Jarl instantly set forth to convey the treasure from the cache to the boat.

When this was done, Fannie and the old sailor hastened to the cove, the latter carrying Harry's weapons.

Both trips were made by the route through the stockade and tunnel, which were at some little distance from the cabin.

When they were gone Harry stationed himself just outside the entrance to the cabin, facing the point on the beach from which the pirate gang was reasonably certain to come.

Young King Crusoe had learned to read the time by the position of the sun and stars.

The latter told him now that it lacked only a few minutes before midnight.

"I haven't long to wait. They may have landed already even," he thought.

He strained his eyes into the hazy night gloom and listened intently.

At the instant he heard the slightest possible noise close behind him.

Before he could stir or breathe, he saw the shadow of a carbine's heavy stock whirling above his head for a terrific blow.

CHAPTER X.

YOUNG KING CRUSOE'S VICTORY.

HARRY CROMBIE was not the boy to be caught napping.

His imminent danger was something which was instinctively grasped by all his faculties rather than seen by the eye alone.

And his activity of brain was equaled only by his agility of limb.

The stock of the carbine had fairly grazed his flesh when he dodged to one side with a movement literally as swift as the velocity of lightning.

The miscreant who dealt the blow was precipitated helplessly forward by his own momentum.

Before he could steady himself, Harry felled him prone to the earth with his own carbine, which the boy coolly wrenched from his grasp.

The Portuguese lay stunned and motionless.

Not a syllable had been uttered by either of the combatants.

Through the stillness Harry could hear the others of the pirate gang skulking up the passage between the rocks.

He darted into a cluster of orange trees that he might observe their number as they passed.

Fourteen filed up the path to the cabin as slyly as red Indians bent on massacre.

Fourteen had come to take captive an old man and a boy and a timid young girl.

"You cowardly fiends!" Harry muttered, with set teeth, as he shook the carbine angrily after their receding forms.

If old Jarl's opinion was correct, there was only one of the buccaneers left aboard to guard the schooner.

Harry thought it was unwise to delay his own departure a moment longer.

The pirates would be like raging tigers the instant they discovered the body of their insensible mate.

They would quicken their steps in searching for young King Crusoe and his companions.

And perhaps their fury would sharpen their wits.

Harry leaped down the path as swiftly and noiselessly as a mountain goat.

He had nearly gained the cove before he heard the yell of fury which told him the body had been found.

A minute later he was safe in the inlet with Fannie and Mr. Jarl, who were awaiting him with much anxiety.

"Shove off. We shall have the whole flock of evil birds after us, I am afraid," said Harry.

He sprang lightly into the boat and snatched an oar.

It needed but a second to shove the boat into deep water.

They rowed rapidly out of the harbor, hugging the shore of the key until they reached the spot where the pirates' boat was fastened.

This they attached to their own by the painter, towing it after them.

Harry then drew a long breath of relief.

"Now we are safe. Without a boat the demons can't get away from the island, very soon at least."

"Great Jonah! The pizen vultures'll tear everything tew pieces with their pesky claws. Thar won't be no stockade ner nuthing left by daylight."

"It seems a pity too, after all our labor," said Harry.

They were near the schooner when an ejaculation from Fannie caused her companions to look toward the key.

A great red cloud hung over it, and points of lurid flame were jutting upward, becoming each instant brighter and of larger volume.

The Cormorants had set fire to the stockade.

"By the twelve tornadoes! Ther cusses hain't diskivered that we're scooted."

"It appears so. They are certainly acting on the supposition of our being concealed somewhere on the island."

A few more strokes of their oars and the little party pulled alongside the Onward Bound.

With a revolver between his teeth and one in his right hand, old Bandy clambered over the schooner's rail.

Young King Crusoe followed, looking like some ancient prince of the northern seas, in his jacket of feathers with his spears bristling from his shoulder.

At first they saw no one and heard nothing.

But presently Harry espied a figure reclining against a coil of rope by the forecastle.

It was one of the Portuguese crew, and the only man aboard.

He was fast asleep.

Harry produced the cords he had brought for the purpose.

Before the pirate sailor was fairly awake they had bound him hands and feet.

When his faculties were sufficiently aroused for him to realize his condition, he gnashed his teeth and howled with rage.

"Jest stow that erway. We want tew know how many of yeou infarnal robber birds thar be aboard this 'ere sassy craft," said Mr. Jarl.

The man protested that he was alone.

After exploring the schooner they were convinced he spoke the truth.

Meanwhile, Fannie Revere had remained in the boat.

They now assisted her aboard, and then they hoisted both boats to the deck.

A stiff breeze was blowing, and Bandy Jarl was a capital sailor.

They soon had the canvas spread before the wind and were scudding away over the rolling waters.

For various reasons they headed for Pensacola.

As they passed the south-western end of the key they heard ferocious yells and curses from the beach.

The Red Cormorants were all collected about the spot where they had left their small boat.

There was light enough for them to see the movements of the schooner.

As they began to understand how cleverly they had been outwitted they were like maniacs in their frantic wrath.

All night the Onward Bound ran gayly before the wind.

In the morning Harry inquired of their prisoner if there was an American flag anywhere on board.

The man said there was, and informed him where it was kept.

In a few minutes they had the stars and stripes floating from their mainmast.

Some time during the forenoon they discovered that they were being chased by a schooner of about their own capacity.

Young King Crusoe examined her through the pirate chieftain's glass, which he found in the elegantly appointed cabin.

"By gracious, Mr. Jarl, it's the Gulf Queen!" he exclaimed.

"Mighty alligators! what on arth dew yeou s'pose that 'ar critter aire arter?"

Harry shook his head.

"That's what gets me," he said.

He handed the glass to Jarl.

"Great spouting whales and grinning sharks! they aire rigged eout with shooting machines! They hev cannon pinting arter us straight as er rail, dern me ef they hain't!"

"I believe they are getting ready to fire, Mr. Jarl."

"They jest be, youngster. Dern me ef I'd believed that 'ar Slycraft would hev spunk ernal."

"And of course they think it is Parza they are chasing."

"Sartain! Ther tew skalerwags hev hed er falling eout, I reckon."

"Shall we get our own guns ready, sir?"

"Sartain agin. But I'd ruther not dew no fighting ef we kin maneuver eout of it."

"I agree with you in that, sir."

"We aire ergoing tew hev our hands fuller'n er tick, anyway yeou kin fix it."

"I can help you to fight," Faanie ventured to say, with pretty confidence.

"We'll jest take ther will fer ther deed, leetle missy. We want yeou tew stay snug and safe in ther cabin, my leetle leddy."

They had little time to wonder what Slycraft's motive could be.

A conflict was unavoidable and imminent.

They had hardly swung their brass cannon into place when a ball came hissing along over the surface of the water.

It failed to strike the white and gold hull.

Bandy Jarl had shifted the sails just in the nick of time, and the graceful pirate craft swerved aside safely out of range.

While Mr. Jarl managed the vessel, with Fannie bravely aiding him at the wheel, Harry handled the guns.

"Make er straight pop fer ther critter's poles, youngster," was the old sailor's counsel.

Harry aimed for the mainmast and let loose the deadly missile.

The boy was astonished at the accuracy of his own fire.

The heavy iron ball struck the mast a few feet from the base, cutting it into splinters.

It fell with a loud crash across the deck of the Gulf Queen, disabling her seriously.

"Mighty berhemoth! try it agin on the fore pole, youngster."

"Look to your sails, Mr. Jarl. There comes a six-pounder."

At the second maneuver the practiced old seaman swung his schooner out of range as easily and securely as before.

With each maneuver he was nearer the enemy's vessel.

"I want er chance fer yeou tew git at ther critters with them 'ar spears and arrars of yeour'n," he said, with a chuckle.

It was a singular fight. As it progressed, the men aboard the Gulf Queen began to weaken.

They fired more at random.

They run hither and thither as if uncertain what to do.

Harry's second fire toppled over the foremast, which fell toward the stern in such a fashion as to smash the steering apparatus.

By this time the two vessels were less than a boat's length apart.

"Oeout with them 'ar spears and arrars of yeour'n, King Crusoe. Show ther pesky varmints what yeou kin dew with yeour own contrivances."

Harry obeyed.

Man after man tumbled to the deck, smitten hip and thigh with those marvelous wooden lances.

In fifteen minutes from the beginning of the strange battle Slycraft's crew was utterly demoralized.

Slycraft himself cried for truce.

"Yeou kin hev no truce. Yeou must give up and scoot inter ther ship's hold as prisners of war. That aire ther best we kin dew fer yeou."

Armed with Bandy's revolvers young King Crusoe boarded the captured vessel.

The dog Demon was at his heels.

Mr. Jarl followed both.

"Up with your hands, boys!" Harry commanded the prisoners of war.

Slycraft was amazed to behold the young castaway instead of the free rover chieftain.

"What ther duse does it mean?" he sputtered.

"The Red Cormorants are on Falcon Key waiting for some of Uncle Sam's officers to take them into custody—that's all," Harry explained.

Among the disabled men Harry presently recognized Dandy Freel. He was completely cowed.

He was too terrified even to beg for mercy.

Young King Crusoe locked his prisoners below, and left the dog Demon on guard.

They connected the Gulf Queen by a hawser to the schooner, and thus towed her into port.

On arriving at Pensacola, Harry sought the United States port officers.

The two schooners with the prisoners were soon in charge of the proper authorities.

On hearing Harry's wonderful story one of Uncle Sam's cutters was sent to Falcon Key after the trapped pirates.

They did not bring back the handsome free rover chieftain alive.

When he realized that his career was ended he shot himself through the heart.

He was really a count, and he was a man who had been destined for better things.

Dandy Freel was let go with a reprimand.

He was sufficiently punished, no doubt, by the contempt with which he was held by his former associates.

Slycraft was sent to New York for trial on several charges.

But neither young King Crusoe nor the others cared to press the matter.

He was kept in jail for a number of months.

Then he was released on bail, and that was the end of the matter.

He was only held long enough to be a witness for Fannie and Harry in the actions brought by them, respectively, for their long withheld fortunes.

They experienced no difficulty in establishing their rights, and they were soon put in possession of their properties.

Harry's treasure-trove proved to be worth more than a million of dollars.

It was a regular Arabian Nights' discovery—a romance almost too marvelous to be credible!

Harry had become so much attached to Falcon Key that he purchased the island from the government.

He built upon it a beautiful residence.

It is now his winter home, and one envied him by all his friends.

A few years after the extraordinary event just recorded, Fannie Revere became Harry's wife.

Bandy Jarl never separated from them.

He is one of their most valued friends. And he is at present the resident overseer at Falcon Key, with the faithful Demon still his companion.

With all his splendor, young King Crusoe remains as unselfish and high-spirited and happy-hearted as of old.

[THE END.]

C. LITTLE, the author of this story, is also the author of the following stories published in THE FIVE CENT WIDE AWAKE LIBRARY: No. 1114, "Bootblack Bob; or, From Rags to Broadcloth." No. 1094, "Newsboy Ned; or, From the Pavement to a Palace." No. 1086, "Steadfast Sid, the Boy Who Never Surrendered; or, Standing Up for a Square Deal." No. 1072, "Go-Ahead Harry, the Boy Who Got There; or, Where There's a Will, There's a Way." No. 1063, "Backbone Bob, the Boy of Pluck; or, Making His Own Way Through the World." No. 1053, "Pacer Dane, the Senate Detective; or, Behind the Scenes in Washington." No. 104, "An Engineer at Seventeen; or, From the Bottom to the Top." No. 1040, "Philadelphia Phil; or, From a Bootblack to a Merchant." No. 1035, "The Boy Slave of New York; or, Sold to a Hunted Man."

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